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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

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FOR AMBASSADOR ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT LIBREVILLE 2152 ACTION SECSTATE 29 DEC 75

QUOTE

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 2152

NODIS

FROM SCHAUFEL

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY AND AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

E.O. 11652: X-GDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, AO, GB, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH GOG PRESIDENT BONGO

SUMMARY. IN COURSE NINETY-MINUTE MEETING DECEMBER 29,
GOG PRESIDENT BONGO PROVIDED ASSURANCES THAT GABON REMAINS
FIRM IN SUPPORT OF FNLA/UNITA IN ANGOLAN SITUATION, THOUGH
GOG NOT PREPARED GET OUT IN FRONT OF ZAIRE. BONGO SOMEWHAT
LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN MOBUTU ON POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION
OF MPLA BEFORE OAU SESSIONS, BUT SEES CHANCE THAT EVEN
INCONCLUSIVE OAU SUMMIT COULD HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS AND
PERHAPS LEAD TO UNSC CONSIDERATION OF ANGOLAN QUESTION.
END SUMMARY.

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2. DRAWING ON AGREED TALKING PAPER, I OPENED MEETING

DECEMBER 29 WITH GOG PRESIDENT BONGO BY OUTLINING
CURRENT USG POSITION ON ANGOLAN SITUATION, STRESSING
(A) SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEW SOVIET INTERVENTION;
(B) FIRMNESS OF USG COMMITMENT TO REMAIN ENGAGED IN
ORDER TO ENSURE SOLUTION SATISFACTORY TO ANGOLANS AND
AFRICA; AND (C) IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO OPPORTUNITY FOR
PROGRESS OFFERED BY FORTHCOMING OAU MEETINGS. I RE-
ITERATED TO PRESIDENT ABSENCE OF USG SPECIAL INTEREST
IN ANGOLA; GLOBAL NATURE OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS
FACTOR INFLUENCING OUR REACTION TO SOVIET EFFORTS AT
IMPLANTATION IN AFRICA; AND USG CONVICTION THAT AFRICANS
MUST TAKE LEAD IN SEEKING SOLUTION TO ANGOLAN CONFLICT.

3. TURNING TO IMMEDIATE TACTICAL PROBLEM, I EMPHASIZED
CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF BLOCKING FURTHER RECOGNITIONS FOR
MPLA PRIOR TO OAU SESSIONS IN ORDER TO PREVENT BUILDUP
OF MOMENTUM ON MPLA SIDE AND STIFFENING OF MPLA REFUSAL
TO NEGOTIATE. USG, I NOTED, HOPED OAU MIGHT BE ABLE TO
FIND COMMON GROUND IN RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CEASEFIRE;
END TO ARMS DELIVERIES, TROOP REINFORCEMENTS, AND
MERCENARY RECRUITMENT; OAU MECHANISM FOR PURSUIT OF
NEGOTIATIONS AMONG CONTENDING FACTIONS; AND CALL FOR
WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. GIVEN
SUCH AN OUTCOME, USG WOULD BE PREPARED SUPPORT OAU
EFFORT WITH FRIENDS ON OTHER CONTINENTS AND ALSO TO
TALK DIRECTLY TO SOVIETS. ONCE COALITION REGIME ESTABLISHED
IN ANGOLA, USG WOULD EXPECT PARTICIPATE IN MULTILATERAL
EFFORT TO MEET COUNTRY'S IMMEDIATE NEEDS, PERHAPS THROUGH
INTERMEDIARY OF ICRC.

4. PRESIDENT RESPONDED WITH EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR
VISIT AND FOR EXPOSITION OF USG POSITION REGARDING "PROBLEM
WHICH CONCERNS US ALL." IN HIS VIEW, HE CONTINUED,
PORTUGUESE BEAR HEAVY SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SITUATION
IN ANGOLA, HAVING IN EFFECT ABDICATED POWER WITHOUT PRO-
VIDING FOR PROPER TRANSITION. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT SAID,
CURRENT PLIGHT OF FNLA/UNITA ALSO IN PART FAULT OF MOBUTU,
PARTICULARLY AS PRESIDENT OF STATE MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED,
WHOSE FAILURE TO ACT DECISIVELY TO GAIN PUBLIC RECOGNITION
OF TWO MOVEMENTS HE SUPPORTS HAD PERMITTED MPLA TO GAIN

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TACTICAL ADVANTAGE ON AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCENE. BONGO
ALSO CRITICIZED ALLEGED FAILURE BY MOBUTU TO CREATE AD-
MINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE CAPABLE OF DELIVERING ON HIS
PROMISES, WITH RESULTANT LACK OF "CONTINUITY" AND FOLLOW-
THROUGH IN ZAIREAN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. BONGO CLAIMS
THAT HE HAS CONSISTENTLY URGED MOBUTU TO TAKE STRONGER
PUBLIC STAND IN SUPPORT OF FNLA/UNITA, AND HAS GOTTEN
GOF TO MAKE SAME APPEAL TO ZAIREAN CHIEF OF STATE.

ACCORDING TO BONGO, FRENCH HAVE SUGGESTED TO MOBUTU THAT ZAIRE BRING COMPLAINT AGAINST SOVIET UNION IN UNSC ON GROUND THAT SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA REPRESENTS THREAT TO ZAIRE, BUT MOBUTU HAS NOT YET RESPONDED.

5. MOBUTU'S REFUSAL TO TAKE LEAD IN RECOGNITION OF FNLA/UNITA REGIME, BONGO CONTINUED, COMPLICATED EFFORTS TO STEM TIDE OF RECOGNITIONS FOR MPLA. PRO-MPLA FORCES ALSO BENEFITED, HE SAID, FROM PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICANS WITH UNITA FORCES AND FROM DOUBTS ABOUT US READINESS TO PERSIST IN WAKE OF EXPERIENCE IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. IN ADDITION, SOVIETS WERE BUSILY OFFERING RMS AND OTHER INDUCEMENTS TO COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT AFRICA IN EFFORT TO WIN THEM OVER TO PRO-MPLA STANCE. AS CONSEQUENCE OF THESE PRESSURES, BONGO SAID, HE FEARED THERE MIGHT WELL BE ADDITIONAL RECOGNITIONS OF MPLA PRIOR TO OAU MEETINGS. HE HIMSELF HAD HELPED KEEP MAURITANIA IN LINE BY TRADING SUPPORT ON SPANISH SAHARA FOR FIRMNESS ON ANGOLA, AND HAD SENT SPECIAL MISSION TO LIBYA WHICH HAD RETURN WITH PROMISE FROM QADHAFI THAT LIBYANS WOULD REMAIN NEUTRAL UNTIL OAU SUMMIT. HE HAD ALSO SPOKEN TO SEVERAL OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE, AND FELT HE COULD AT LEAST COUNT ON CAMEROON, CAR, CHAD, NIGER, SENEGAL, AND UPPER VOLTA TO HOLD THE LINE. BURUNDI, HE ADMITTED, HAD BEEN PARTICULAR DISAPPOINTMENT TO HIM IN WAKE OF PROMISES GIVEN BY MICOMBERO DURING LATTER'S STATE VISIT TO GABON, AND HE HAD REFUSED RECEIVE GOB DELEGATION WHICH SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN BURUNDI'S DECISION TO RECOGNIZE MPLA.

6. AS FOR OAU MEETING ITSELF, BONGO EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IT IS LIKELY TO PROVE FAILURE IN SENSE THAT IT WILL PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO PRODUCE ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION FOR ANGOLAN CONFLICT. YET SUMMIT NEED NOT BE TOTAL LOSS. PRESENCE
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OF STRONG CHIEFS OF STATE SUPPORTING FNLA/UNITA, COMBINED WITH EXPECTED REFUSAL OF MPLA TO AGREE TO ANY FORM OF NEGOTIATIONS OR EVEN ATTEND, COULD HELP SWAY AFRICAN OPINION TOWARD FNLA/UNITA AND PREVENT MPLA BANDWAGON FROM GAINING FURTHER MOMENTUM. PRESIDENT WONDERED ALOUD WHICH CHIEFS OF STATE WOULD PROVIDE NECESSARY LEADERSHIP FOR THIS EFFORT IN BEHALF FNLA/UNITA, NOTING PARENTHETICALLY THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO ATTEND OAU SUMMIT BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC COMMITMENTS.

7. PRESIDENT CONCLUDED PRESENTATION BY OBSERVING THAT USG AND EUROPEAN FRIENDS WERE UNDERSTANDABLY UNWILLING TO RECOGNIZE FNLA/UNITA REGIME AHEAD OF AFRICANS, AND BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT WE WOULD BE READY TO MOVE AT APPROPRIATE TIME. USG, HE ADDED, CAN AT RIGHT MOMENT

PLAY TRUMP CARD BY USING ITS INFLUENCE WITH SUCH KEY LEADERS AS HASSAN F MOROCCO, KHALED OF SAUDI ARABIA, AND SHAH OF IRAN TO GAIN THEIR SUPPORT FOR FNLA/UNITA. GABON, FOR ITS PART, WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS WITH ITS FRIENDS IN AFRICA TO PRODUCE BEST POSSIBLE RESULT.

8. IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT, I SUGGESTED IMPORTANCE FOR FNLA/UNITA OF HAVING STRONG DELEGATIONS FROM GABON AND OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AT OAU MINISTERIAL AND SUMMIT MEETINGS SO THEY COULD DO EFFECTIVE WORK IN CORRIDORS WHERE REAL BARGAINS ARE SEALED. I ALSO STATED USG READINESS TO PRESS SOUTH AFRICANS FOR WITHDRAWAL IN CONTEXT OF OAU DECISION ON REMOVAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES FROM ANGOLA, AND EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT WE COULD SUCCEED IN THIS EFFORT.

9. IN VIEW OF GOZ FAILURE TO GO TO UNSC AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELUCTANCE TO REFER AFRICAN QUESTIONS, I ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THIS WERE STILL A FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE, IF NECESSARY, AFTER THE OAU SUMMIT. BONGO THOUGHT IT WAS, PARTICULARLY IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD BE REPLACED BY MERCENARIES WHICH HE SUGGESTED SAG SHOULD FINANCE.

10. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT GABONESE MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ZAMBIANS AT OAU MEETING SINCE, TO BEST MY KNOWLEDGE THEY WERE WORKING ALONG SIMILAR LINES AS SUGGESTED IN MY SECRET

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TALKING POINTS. HE SAID HE WOULD DO SO AND ASKED AMBASSADOR STEIGMAN TO GIVE THOSE SPECIFIC POINTS TO FONMIN.

11. AT END I REVERTED TO USG DETERMINATION WHICH I HOPED HE WOULD REMEMBER WHEN HE DISCUSSED ANGOLAN QUESTIONS WITH OTHERS.

12. COMMENT: BONGO IS STILL FIRM ON HIS COMMITMENT, BUT IS LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN MOBUTU ABOUT ADDITIONAL AFRICAN RECOGNITIONS OF MPLA. ENCOURAGING FACTOR IS THAT BONGO CAN SEE AND WORK FOR INDETERMINATE OAU OUTCOME WHICH, WHILE FAILING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, COULD HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS, POSSIBLY LEADING TO SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF ANGOLA. STEIGMAN

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